1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murngin OI 17

quantities regularly in certain spots along the coast. These eggs are greatly relished by the natives.[8]

3. Kinship Customs

The enlargement of a Murngin's economic behavior is dependent on two factors: (1) the horde; and (2) certain reciprocals in the kinship structure. All the relatives of a Murngin ordinarily exchange gifts with him, but certain kinship personalities do this much more than others. The mother's brother—sister's son relationship has been seized upon as the mechanism for enlarging the economic life of a Murngin man. "Far-off" wakus and gawels are sought by a man, distant not only socially but geographically; the greater distance a man has between him and a trading waku or gawel, the greater pride he exhibits when displaying articles sent or brought to him by his relative, and the greater satisfaction he feels when sending or returning gifts. (See chapter on kinship, page 95.)

The mari-kutara relationship is much the same, except that there is a tendency to indulge in ritual gifts much more than in those from the ordinary material culture. The feathered string which has been the decorative covering of the totemic poles is sent by mari or kutara to the other. This exchange of ritual goods plays a prominent part in the economic life of the people, since if a mari receives a gift from kutara he must, in a not too great period of time, return a present of like ritual value. The finely turned string, often used as ritual string, is usually made by women, at times hundreds of feet of it. It is generously covered with birds' feathers and used on one of the larger totem poles. Obviously a great amount of work on the part of the women and the killing of a large number of birds is required to meet the needs of ritual exchange. Only the red feathers from the breasts

[8] The people of the various areas, particularly those west and east of the Goyder, are always accusing each other of cannibalism. The author can vouch that no cannibals are present among the peoples east of the Goyder and roughly in the Murngin area. The Murngin tell a number of stories of the people south of Cape Stewart which to them prove the existence of cannibalism there. Some of them claim they have seen men's baskets filled with meat which was neither kangaroo nor dunong and which they were convinced was human flesh. In one account I collected, the narrator described watching a cannibal feast. The victim, a large man, was carved and prepared for cooking. There is much scornful joking among the Murngin about these people to the west of them. When they think they see human flesh in the basket of one of these people they say, "Ah, what is this one?" and another Murngin replies, "Oh, that's a kangaroo," with a sarcastic inflection in his voice. The other one says, "Yes, but it doesn't smell just like kangaroo," to which the reply is made, "Oh, well, maybe it's only a dead man."

speaking groups of Elcho Island, the Glyde and Goyder Rivers on the west, and eastwards around Buckingham, Arnhem and Melville Bays, to Cape Arnhem and Port Bradshaw and south to Caledon and Blue Mud Bays, had little actual experience of the sinister cult of the *kalka*. But when the Methodist Mission moved from Elcho Island to the Crocodile Group and set up its headquarters at Milingimbi, an island lying a short distance off the coast, it brought the people who had accompanied the Mission into the very stronghold of a form of secret killing or sorcery that was strange to them. On this account they came to regard the people of the west—whom they called *warnba*, strangers—with fear and suspicion, and they have been more or less at loggerheads with them ever since, resulting in frequent blood feuds, and a considerable loss of life.

For years it was the practice of the natives who had moved from their own countries to the island of Milingimbi, into what was to them foreign and hostile territory, to discourage visits of the local people by acts of aggression and violence, depending on the Mission to protect them from reprisals.

Mr. Webb, who was in charge of the Methodist Mission in the Crocodile Islands, once informed me, when I was at Milingimbi during a brief respite from patrols on the mainland of Arnhem Land, that in the early days of the Mission there he had once, to maintain peace, bought all their fighting spears from the natives, but that when an attack from the mainland was reported to be imminent he had had to re-issue these—though in actual fact the attack did not occur.

As often occurs when a people are brought into contact with those of a different culture, the natives from the east tended to exaggerate traits of the Burara that they regarded as undesirable and often told me ribald stories stressing the misdeeds of their neighbours. After a long recital of the faults of the Burara, whom he stigmatized as *warnba*, one informant remarked by way of special emphasis, '*yappa lukka!*'—they cohabit with their sisters. The brother-sister tabu is rigidly enforced in east Arnhem Land. Even to mention the name of a woman in the presence of her brother is a grave ritual offence, called *mirriri*, and brother-sister incest is a crime for which there is no expiation, punished by the death of both parties.

The charge of incest against the Burara may owe its origin to the fact that these people, unlike their neighbours to the east, had a normal tribal organization, which meant that members of clans of opposite moieties within the tribe and of the appropriate kinship status could marry, since the tribe is not exogamous. Because people between whom marriage was permitted were actually members of the same tribe, the practice would suggest incest to their neighbours of the east, already fearful of the magic of their *kalka* and ready to attribute to these people practices that were to them anti-social and unnatural. This attitude of the Elcho Island people was well shown by the fact that they charged their neighbours with cannibalism and said of them '*nganak lukka*'—they eat flesh (human)—overlooking the fact that they themselves also practised a form of ritual

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cannibalism which they regarded as indispensable to a hunter in order to maintain his prowess at a level that could earn for him the coveted title of *tjambait*.

During much of the time—amounting to several years—that I lived in Arnhem Land I hunted with groups of the status of horde, which often claimed one or more *marrngitmirri*. I frequently saw these men practising their cult, and was able to make a detailed study of both *marrngitmirri* and *kalka* while I lived a nomadic life with these people.

Kalka *and* Marrngit

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The cult of the *ragalk* or *kalka—kalk'* of the Burara—, to which I have referred, is believed to be used to bring about the death of a man who has been made a scapegoat—frequently by a rite of augury—for the death of a member of an enemy horde. Often the victim will be a man against whom the deceased or his group have harboured a grievance of long standing, perhaps because he has failed to honour some payment such as that obligatory to one who has been present at a *ngarra*—or clan totem—ceremony, to make a ceremonial presentation of *ngata*, food (really vegetable food), or of *gerri*, goods, valuables, to the elders of this clan. Of this obligation they say 'to pay back that *marr*'—to propitiate the *malli* of the culture hero whose totem is involved. This *ngata* and the *gerri* presented by men who have attended the *ngarra* by invitation, are dedicated to the *wangarr* and are said to be *yarkomirri*, *i.e.* sacramental. Failure to discharge the obligation to make expiatory payments of the kind that I have mentioned places a man in danger of death by magic, even after a long period of time.

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In Arnhem Land the belief is held that the death of any person in full possession of his social personality is due, not to what the white man terms 'natural causes' but to the act of an enemy, often a person who is believed to bear a grudge, real or imaginary, against the deceased. Even death from sickness or drowning, from attack by shark or crocodile, and especially from snake bite, is not regarded as the primary cause, but merely the agent used by an enemy, or by a *ragalk* whose aid he has enlisted, to bring this about. The only exception to the belief about natural death is extreme old age, when, in the words of one of my informants, the people say 'time belong him now'—his time is spent, he has lived his life. Certain types of swellings and deformities are believed to result from ritual visitation or punishment by the *wangarr*, the totemic ancestors, for the violation, even accidental or inadvertent, of a tabu, particularly on the eating of foods which are prohibited at certain critical stages in a man or woman's relation to his family or horde, as at initiation, on the death of near kin, or during pregnancy. Boils of a type distinguished as *marlung* are believed to be due to ritual punishment and so held as proof of the violation of a tabu, usually on the eating of food that is *duyu* (tabu) at critical stages in a man's life.

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A man in east Arnhem Land named Nyarrang pointed to a large tumour on his neck and told me that it was due to the *malli birlma*—*i.e.* a blow from the 'shade' or spirit of an implement called *birlma*—used today as a mallet or hammer in food-preparation by women, and 'found'